

LSC Meets Demands With Inspiration, Hard Work

I am grateful for the warm reception I received during my first year as president of the Legal Services Corporation. The LSC board, staff, and grantees, as well as colleagues across the access-to-justice community, welcomed me with support, encouragement, and counsel, confirming what I said when I was appointed to this position—I have the best job in American law.

The year unfolded as LSC faced the twin challenges of reduced resources and increased demand for civil legal services. Many grantees saw staff reductions, and some had to close offices. In my visits to legal aid programs around the country, however, I saw time and again how, through a remarkable combination of innovation, hard work, and self-sacrifice, they are finding new ways to maximize client service. I met scores of talented legal aid lawyers whose passion and commitment to their clients is both palpable and infectious. They have inspired me and deepened my own commitment to supporting them in the work they do.

To leverage the limited resources we have available, I believe it is essential to improve collaboration and cooperation among all those involved in funding, promoting, and delivering civil legal services. We are working with other funders of legal services, bar leaders, pro bono organizations, judges, court administrators, advocacy groups, law schools, and the entire provider community to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of service to clients and to avoid unnecessary duplication.

Our approach to disaster response shows the benefits of collaboration. Last year had more than its share of natural disasters, with hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods plaguing large sections of the country. During 2011, LSC assisted grantees in more than 28 states with disaster preparation and response and approved three emergency grants to help respond to the needs of low-income people affected by disasters. We worked with the

American Bar Association, state and local bar associations, the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other organizations to get the most from our efforts.

As budgets tighten, it becomes especially important to develop new and better ways to assess and report the benefits and outcomes of the services that LSC funds. In 2011, using a planning grant from the Public Welfare Foundation, we laid the foundation for a data project designed to improve LSC's collection and analysis of case information and to provide assistance to grantees in managing and using their own data.

The effective use of technology remains one of the best ways of getting the most from what we have, and in 2011 LSC continued its historical commitment to encouraging innovation in the delivery of legal services. Through its Technology Initiative Grants (TIG) program, LSC awarded 37 grants totaling more than \$3.6 million. The TIG grants went to LSC-funded programs in 25 states for a variety of projects, including developing online intake systems; enhancing access to Web-based resources for Spanish-speaking, limited English proficient clients; and expanding StatesideLegal.org, a website that provides information and resources to veterans and military families.

It was a challenging year, but one of genuine accomplishment and new opportunities as well. We will build on that success as we move forward to expand access to justice and bring the highest quality possible to the delivery of civil legal services.



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James J. Sandman
President

Legal Services Corporation
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